

## Walt Whitman, from "I Hear America Singing"

*Influenced in some ways by Emerson and the Transcendentalists, Whitman celebrated the energy and nobility of the individual and the glory of a nation whose republican government and free market economic system promoted the dignity of the individual. Also a fervent nationalist, Whitman rejoiced in the abundance of America both natural and industrial that he saw as both a source of and evidence of American greatness. Furthermore, some see Whitman and his poetry as an influence on the contemporary movement for homosexual liberation.*

"I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear,

Those of mechanics, each one singing his as it should be blithe and strong,

The carpenters singing his as he measures his plank and beam,

The mason singing his as he makes ready for work, or leaves off work,

The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat, the deckhand singing on the steamboat deck,

The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench, the hatter singing as he stands,

The wood-cutter's song, the ploughboy's on his way in the morning, or at noon intermission or at sundown,

The delicious singing of the mother, or of the young wife at work, or of the girl sewing or washing,

Each singing what belongs to him or her and to none else...."